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Letter dated 25 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from Najib Ghadbian, representative of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, dated 25 August 2015 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Abdallah **Al-Mouallimi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 25 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, it is with grave concern that I draw your attention to the rising death toll in Syria and the wanton destruction of civilian life by Assad's forces, in advance of the Under-Secretary-General's briefing to the Security Council on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014).

August was another deadly month in the Syrian crisis. As of 24 August, an estimated 826 civilians had been killed, more than half of them by Assad's indiscriminate aerial weapons, including barrel bombs. In Douma, Zabadani, Aleppo and Idlib, the Syrian regime's aerial attacks on civilians, medical facilities and schools continued with increasing devastation (see enclosure). The situation was particularly horrific in civilian-occupied areas northeast of Damascus, where Assad's forces engaged in a calculated campaign to eradicate opposition-strongholds in and around the capital. On 16 August, Syrian regime air raids pounded the heavily populated marketplace of Douma, a suburb of Damascus, resulting in over 111 civilian deaths in what is one of the bloodiest atrocities committed by the regime in four years. The scale and barbarity of the attack prompted immediate international condemnations, including a scathing indictment from the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, who called the regime's attacks on civilians in Douma "devastating" and "unacceptable." Yet just one week later, on 22 August, Assad's aerial forces returned to the besieged city, killing more than 50 civilians. As I write, Syrian rescue workers are in the process of trying to save civilians trapped under the rubble of Assad's destruction.

The attacks on the Damascus suburbs are particularly devastating, coming as they do on the second anniversary of the chemical weapons attacks on Ghouta, when Assad's forces deliberately gassed more than 1,400 people, including more than 400 children, to death. Like the barrel bomb attacks on Douma, the question of responsibility for the chemical attacks on Ghouta remains mired in impunity. No one has been held accountable for the use of chemical weapons. No justice has been served for the children, mothers and fathers who lost their loved ones. No one has suffered consequences for orchestrating, authorizing, or participating in the single worst war crime of the twenty-first century. As a result, war crimes across Syria have continued unabated and the humanitarian situation has shifted from bad to catastrophic.

Since the attacks on Ghouta on 21 August 2013, the death toll in Syria has soared from 110,000 to over 250,000 killed. The number of Syrian refugees has doubled, from 2 to 4 million. The number of Syrians in need has surged, from 6.8 million to more than 12 million people. Extremist forces have proliferated, assuming control of as much 50 per cent of Syrian territory. And the killing has continued through the use of both conventional and chemical means. In the past two years, Assad has used chemical agents as a weapon of war on more than 46 separate occasions, while his forces have killed more than 12,500 civilians with deadly barrel bombs.

Few have suffered more than the roughly 640,000 Syrians living in besieged areas across the country, and the millions of others trapped in hard-to-reach areas. Far too many Syrian civilians continue to be denied aid by a brutal regime that employs the denial of vital humanitarian aid as a weapon of war in a desperate bid to starve its citizens into submission. Nowhere is the situation more dire than in Douma, where nearly 300 urgent surgeries cannot be performed because the Assad regime denies life-saving medical supplies, including antibiotics and anthelmintic drugs needed to treat infections.

The war crimes in Syria must be stopped. The Syrian people need protection. They are dying without it. Before the briefing of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to the Security Council on Syria on 27 August, I therefore appeal to the Security Council to take the following actions:

1. **Answer Syrians' calls for civilian protection by enforcing a no-fly zone in Syria:** A no-fly zone would save some 200 civilian lives a week. It would stop the leading killer of Syrian civilians: Assad's illegal barrel bombs. If the Security Council will not enforce a no-fly zone, then the Member States must;

2. **Enforce Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014): Enforce the above resolutions** by instructing the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to all Syrians in need, including in Douma, where hundreds of Syrian civilians are in urgent need of medical supplies but are denied access due to a brutal siege overseen by the forces of the Syrian regime;

3. **Refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court:** A referral to the International Criminal Court would help provide a path towards justice for the 1,429 Syrians gassed to death by Assad's forces on 21 August, and the 140,000 Syrians killed since. It would also deter future crimes by making clear to all war criminals that their atrocities will be met by clear consequences. If the Security Council will not agree a referral, Member States should establish an alternative mechanism such as a Special Tribunal.

Without exception, Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013), 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2209 (2015) and 2235 (2015) have gone unenforced. The failure to enforce these resolutions has cost countless lives. The Security Council can and must do better, including by providing the protection my people so desperately need. The failure of Member States to protect Syrian civilians is no longer a question of legality or feasibility. It is a question of will. Inaction is a massive humanitarian betrayal. And it has fuelled a deadly extremist threat that knows no borders. It is time to take the action in Syria, which will save lives, relieve the humanitarian consequences and make progress against extremism.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative to the United Nations

Enclosure

Syrian regime violations of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014)

I. All parties must immediately cease attacks against civilians and the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas

Violation: Syrian regime's indiscriminate use of aerial weapons and barrel bombs

In both July and August 2015, indiscriminate aerial weapons once again proved to be the leading killer of Syrian civilians. In July alone, the Syrian regime deployed some 2,041 barrel bombs to kill more than 368 civilians, including 83 children and 63 women. Barrel bombs formed a major part of the regime's 180 air strikes on Syrian residential areas, which resulted in an estimated 857 deaths in July. As of 25 August, some 902 civilians had been killed by Syrian regime forces, roughly half of whom had died as a result of indiscriminate aerial shelling and barrel bombs. Douma, in the Rif Dimashq governorate, sustained most warplane shelling during the reporting period, with attacks on crowded market places resulting in over 114 deaths and more than 550 injuries between 14 and 17 August.

Table 1
Regime's use of aerial weapons and barrel bombs (July-August 2015)

Date	*Governorate*	*City*	*Nature of attack*	*Casualties*
24 Aug.	Rif Dimashq, Idlib	Douma, Saqba, Hamouria, Kafar Batna, Jesrn, Al Hebet	Aerial bombardment	32 killed
23 Aug.	Rif Dimashq, Damascus, Aleppo, Daraa	Al Hammuriyya, Saqba, Shabaa, Daraa Al Balad, Mare, Sukkari	Warplane shelling	29 killed
22 Aug.	Deir Ezzor, Damascus suburbs, Daraa	Douma, Al Buomar, Lajat	Warplane shelling	28 killed
21 Aug.	Idlib, Damascus, Rif Dimashq	Erbeen, Madaya, Malaab, Adra, Marj, Beit Sawa, Douma	Shelling	20 killed
20 Aug.	Damascus, Daraa, Idlib, Homs, Aleppo	Douma, West Gharriya, Hamouria, Madaya, Kafrauid, Jisreen, Baba Amr	Warplane shelling	25 killed
19 Aug.	Raqqa, Damascus, Daraa, Aleppo, Homs	Harasta, Zabdeen, Jisr Shagour, Maarat Misreen, Daraa Al Balad, Palmyra, Bab, Abbada, Kafr Zeit	Warplane shelling	31 killed

Date	*Governorate*	*City*	*Nature of attack*	*Casualties*
18 Aug.	Damascus, Idlib, Aleppo, Hama	Douma, Mishic, Idlib city, Ein Tarma, Erbeen, Bustan el-Qassr	Shelling	19 killed
16/17 Aug.	Rif Dimashq	Douma	4 air strikes	114 killed, 550 injured
14 Aug.	Rif Dimashq	Zamalka city, Harasta, Mesraba, Douma, Erbeen	Over 15 air strikes	190 killed
13 Aug.	Rif Dimashq	Kafar Batna	1 air strike	5 killed, 14 injured
12 Aug.	Rif Dimashq	Douma Al Hal market, Saqba, Hamouria, Ein Tarma, Kafar Batna	14 air strikes	Over 45 killed, 202 injured
11 Aug.	Homs, Damascus, Deir Ezzor, Aleppo, Idlib	Madaya, Baqqen, Mouadamiyeh, Sbikhan, Tadif, Binnish, Idlib city, Qouriyeh, Palmyra, Bayada, Zafarana	Shelling	27 killed
10 Aug.	Idlib, Deir Ezzor, Damascus, Daraa	Jarjanaz, Maarat Hirmeh, Htaitet Turkman, Shabaa, Mzaireeb, Ariha, Joseph village	Warplane shelling	22 killed
9 Aug.	Daraa, Idlib, Homs, Damascus	Zamreen, Nawa, Naziheen Camp, Ballion, Jobar, Zardna	Warplane shelling	10 killed
8 Aug.	Hama, Idlib	Al Ghab plain, Maart Numan, Bweda, Himania, Rabdeh	Shelling	32 killed
7 Aug.	Idlib, Damascus, Aleppo	Saraqib, Jobas village, Mare, Darat Azza, Moudamiyeh, Kernaz, Ariha	Shelling	24 killed
6 Aug.	Aleppo, Damascus, Homs	Jeroud, Darat Azza, Kuwait, Mouadmiyeh	Shelling	4 killed
5 Aug.	Homs	Telbeiseh	Shelling	1 killed
4 Aug.	Aleppo	Masaken Al Sabeel	Shelling	1 killed
3 Aug.	Idlib, Daraa, Aleppo, Hama	Ariha, Manbej, Daraa Al Balad, Mareian, Hwash, Amkieh		23 killed

Date	*Governorate*	*City*	*Nature of attack*	*Casualties*
31 July	Daraa, Idlib	Al Naema, Al Kark, Tiftinza, Bakeen	Barrel bombs	10 killed
30 July	Daraa, Hama	Tafas, Al Naema, Al Hwayez	Over 6 barrel bombs	8 killed
29 July	Daraa, Hama	Al Msayfera, Al Madeek Fort	Barrel bombs	3 killed
28 July	Homs, Daraa, Hama	Palmyra, Dael, Al-Kamiya, Al Madeek Fort	Barrel bombs	19 killed
27 July	Rif Dimashq, Homs	Douma, Palmyra	Air strikes	20 killed, 40 injured
26 July	Daraa	Al Ghariyi	Barrel bombs	2 killed
23-25 July	Dar'a, Hama, Idlib	Dar'a, Al Ghariya, Tal shehab, Al Kark, Al Hawiez, Knasfara, Idlib city	Barrel bombs and surface-to-surface missiles	82 killed
22 July	Aleppo, Daraa	Kafr Aweed, Rasem Al Abed, Al Bab, Dael	Over 4 barrel bombs	23 killed, 30 injured
21 July	Aleppo, Daraa, Homs	Maghayer, Qasr Al-Breij, Dael, Talbisa	1 surface-to-surface missile, 6 barrel bombs	Over 38 killed
20 July	Aleppo, Daraa	Menbej town, Al Imam, Deir Hafer, Daraa Al Balad	Over 9 barrel bombs	29 killed
19 July	Daraa	Al Hara, Al Rayy, Busra Al Sham	Over 6 barrel bombs	11 killed
18 July	Aleppo, Daraa, Idlib	Al Halak, Al Shouwaylikh, Al Ghariyi, Al Furja	Over 4 barrel bombs	5 killed
17 July	Aleppo, Daraa	Al Bab, Al Hara, Tafas	Over 3 barrel bombs	15 killed, 11 injured
16 July	Idlib, Aleppo, Daraa	Maaret Msreen town, Al Bab, Aran town, Al Zaytan, Al Harak, Al Ghazeyi, Qurm Al Jouz	Over 5 barrel bombs	30 killed, 22 injured
15 July	Aleppo	Al Bab, Darat Ezza	2 barrel bombs, 2 thermal rockets	13 killed, 20 injured

Date	*Governorate*	*City*	*Nature of attack*	*Casualties*
14 July	Damascus, Aleppo, Hama	Yarmouk camp, Al Kabaseen, Al Habeet	Mortar attack, 2 barrel bombs	6 killed
13 July	Aleppo, Daraa, Hama	Al Bab, Al Safeera, Al Sham, Al Fatera	Over 5 barrel bombs	45 killed
12 July	Aleppo, Hama	Al Baza, Al Safeera, Al Tamana	Over 4 barrel bombs	19 killed
11 July	Aleppo	Al Bab	3 barrel bombs	23 killed
10 July	Daraa	Al Hara	2 barrel bombs	7 killed
8 July	Aleppo	Tarik Al Bab, Karm Al Beik	Aerial attack	20 killed
7 July	Aleppo	Al Ma'adi	2 barrel bombs	13 killed
6 July	Hama	Al Tramla	Barrel bombs	1 killed
5 July	Daraa, Hama, Idlib	Al Naema, Saida, Al Latamna, Al Hawash, Al Ariima, Al Fakee, Sfouhen	Over 7 barrel bombs	21 killed
4 July	Damascus	Damascus	Mortar shells	2 killed, 3 injured
3 July	Daraa, Hama	Daraa Al Balad, Al Ramla	4 barrel bombs	2 killed
2 July	Daraa	Tafas	3 barrel bombs	7 killed
1 July	Aleppo, Daraa	Al Bab city, Gharz	2 thermal missiles and barrel bombs	14 killed, 10 injured

Source: Syrian Network for Human Rights and the Violations Documentation Centre in Syria.

Violation: Syrian regime's indiscriminate use of chemical weapons

The Syrian regime continued its indiscriminate use of chemical weapons throughout the reporting period, committing more than seven separate incidents of chlorine gas attacks, in direct violation of Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2235 (2015). These attacks resulted in nine deaths and dozens of injuries. Reports of the continued use of chlorine gas must be investigated without delay by Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) monitors.

Table 2
Regime's chlorine gas attacks (July-August 2015)

Date	*Governorate*	*City*	*Nature of attack*	*Casualties*
11 Aug	Eastern Ghouta	Erbin	Chlorine gas attack	1 killed, 4 injured
6 Aug	Damascus, Eastern Ghouta	Jobar	Chlorine gas attack	2 killed, 13 suffocated
30 July	Damascus, Eastern Ghouta	Jobar	Chlorine gas attack	1 died, 25 suffocated
27 July	Damascus	Zamalka, Jobar	Over 7 rockets loaded with chlorine	5 intoxicated, 27 asphyxiated
21 July	Damascus suburbs	Harasta	2 bombs loaded with chlorine gas	5 intoxicated
8 July	Deir Al Zour	Al Sheikh Yaseen neighbourhood, Al Hwayka	3 rockets loaded with chlorine gas	5 killed, 23 injured
7 July	Aleppo	Al-Zahra	2 barrel bombs loaded with chlorine gas	27 individuals intoxicated

Source: Syrian Network for Human Rights and the Syrian American Medical Society

II. All parties must immediately lift sieges of populated areas and allow unrestricted delivery of humanitarian aid. All parties must promptly allow United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners safe and unhindered access to populations in need

Violation: Syrian regime's sieges

An estimated 640,000 Syrians currently reside in besieged areas and 4.8 million in hard-to-reach areas inside Syria. Out of these, a majority are besieged by the forces of the Syrian regime, many in eastern Ghouta and Darayya, where they suffer from starvation and a lack of medical care. Access to medical supplies and equipment continue to be restricted and their timely delivery is severely hindered by regime-imposed limitations. Tens of thousands of Syrians continued to be deprived of treatment as a consequence of acts of hindrance or confiscation by regime forces.

III. Strongly condemns the arbitrary detention and torture of civilians in Syria, notably in prisons and detention facilities, and demands the immediate end of these practices

Violation: Torture of prisoners by the Syrian regime

Over the past four years, over 11,427 deaths have been documented due to the systematic practice of torture by the Assad regime. Most prisoners die owing to the lack of medical treatment, falling victim to a host of medical problems, including diarrhoea and the loss of fluids, pneumonia, asthma and heart problems, and from minor injuries that become infected due to lack of treatment. In July, 57 torture-

related deaths were documented in Syrian regime prisons, including 20 in Daraa governorate, 13 in Hama, 7 in the Damascus suburbs, 5 in Homs, 5 in Deir Al Zour, 4 in Aleppo, 2 in Raqqa, 1 in Damascus and 1 in Lattakia. Torture-related deaths continued in August. On 19 August, 10 victims were tortured to death. On 24 August, in Der-Ezzor province, a man from Zeban village was tortured to death in regime prisons after having been detained for two years. On 24 August, in Daraa, Habes Falah Al Dowkhi from Sour was tortured to death in a detention centre.

IV. All parties must immediately cease attacks against medical facilities and other civilian objects as well as medical personnel, and prioritize the fullest possible medical attention for those in need. Further demands that all parties demilitarize medical facilities, school and other civilian facilities

Violation: Attacks by the Syrian regime on medical facilities and medical staff (July-August 2015)

Attacks on medical facilities, ambulances and medical personnel continued unabated in July, with the organization Physicians for Human Rights reporting nine attacks on eight medical facilities — all carried out by aircraft of the Syrian regime. The Syrian regime also killed other medical personnel in July.

Table 3
Targeting of medical personnel and facilities by the Syrian regime (July-August 2015)

Date	*Governorate*	*City*	*Facility targeted*	*Nature of attack*	*Casualties/damages*
7-10 Aug.	Idlib	Saraqeb	Attack on 9 hospitals	Aerial bombardment	11 civilians killed, 41 injured (including 7 medics)
28 July	Idlib	Idlib, Kansafra	Idlib Polyclinics, Syrian American Medical Society hospital	Aerial bombardment	2 medics killed, 7 civilians killed
23 July	Daraa	Tal Shehab	Tal Shihab field hospital	Over 5 barrel bombs	3 children injured. Hospital went out of service
19 July	Aleppo	Manbij, Al Sakhour	National hospital	3 thermal rockets	4 injured, severe material damage to the hospitals
17 July	Damascus	Deir Al Asafeer	Medical centre	Rocket attack	Severe material damage
16 July	Aleppo	Jib Al Kibba		3 thermal rockets	10 killed
5 July	Daraa, Idlib	Daraa, Knasfara	Daraa makeshift hospital	Rocket attack	1 killed. Hospital is now out of service
1 July	Idlib, Daraa	Tamana'a	Al Tamana medical point, Saida Hospital	Barrel bombs, gas cylinders	15 killed, 5 injuries including 2 medics killed. Hospital was out of service for 5 days

Source: Physicians for Human Rights and the Syrian Network for Human Rights.